

Audiovisual Coverage of the Events at the Fences in Ceuta and Melilla: From A Sensationalistic to a Humanitarian View

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- *The attempt by African citizens to scale the fences at Ceuta and Melilla in October 2005 was covered by the television stations using an audiovisual treatment that blew the events out of proportion and which afforded an image of immigrants that was not normal. All in all, TV3 took the most humanitarian view, TVE-1 stood out for its coverage of political actions, Tele-5 prioritised the political confrontation between the government and the opposition and Antena 3 applied news strategies addressed at sensationalism. Despite these differences, there was a homogeneity of audiovisual information based on common parameters - so much so that we experimented with changing the news summaries, mixing the sound from one station with the footage from another - and found the result was a synchronic and completely valid product within the standard parameters of this television format.*

Key words

Audiovisual coverage, sensationalism, homogeneity, television news

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Presentation

In October 2005, journalists confronted a news novelty with regards the issue of immigration: the usual method of employing small fishing boats for citizens from Africa to enter Europe was replaced by attempts to scale the border fences at Ceuta and Melilla. The repetitiveness of the events, together with their delimitation and geographic proximity, was one of the main reasons that led to the great news interest and which involved a significant number of news crews being dispatched to the area. The purpose of this article is to present the main results and conclusions of the analysis of the information produced by the evening news shows of the public and private generalist television stations in Spain about the events in Ceuta and Melilla. In particular, we studied the highest-rating stations TV3, TVE-1, Antena 3 TV and Tele-5.

Given the special circumstances of the story, we wanted to determine factors such as journalistic assessment on the basis of the length of transmission time and location in the rundown and main body of the news, criteria applied with regards journalistic monitoring (currentness, sensationalism, etc.), the formats used in the coverage, the interrelation between sound and image and sources of information and whether they were mentioned or were present in the form of statements.

The sample was selected on the basis of the course of the events and the quota of maximum news attention given by the four stations involved. For these reasons, we chose the news shows for a non-natural week from Thursday through to the following Wednesday, coinciding with two news novelties:

- 1) Thursday, 6 October: Six people died when they try to scaled the fence at Melilla, and

2) Wednesday, 12 October: The European Union acknowledged at the Luxembourg summit that 30,000 Africans in Morocco and Algeria were ready to migrate to Europe via the fences at Ceuta and Melilla.

The television material needed for the analysis was provided by the Catalonia Broadcasting Council (CAC). The designed methodology was based on thematic and comparative criteria which Migracom has been applying to research works since 1996 and which enables an in-depth analysis of daily audiovisual coverage, the establishment of specific characteristics of each station and a comparative study to determine the quality of the audiovisual and textual content. We also bore in mind the CAC's recommendations on the news coverage of immigration published in 2002 and aimed at the broadcast media, with the intention of confirming the application of good practices in news production.

1. Presence: Time Devoted and Order of Appearance

All the stations included the events in Ceuta and Melilla on their news shows: however, the comparative analysis found divergences with regards the total time each devoted in absolute and relative terms, and also in terms of the evolution of the daily time.

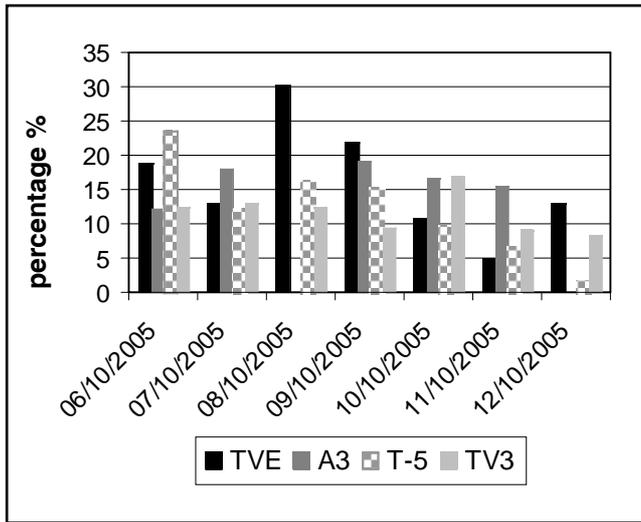
In absolute terms, TVE-1 (49'33") devoted most time to the stories, followed by TV3 (40'51") and Tele-5 (40'36"). In fourth place came Antena 3 TV (31'23"), a station that cut out two news programmes during the analysed week in favour of broadcasting the Spanish football team's progress in the classification round of the World Cup. From this perspective, we can see that it is not possible to establish a direct relationship between station ownership and time devoted to the issue, although TVE-1 stood out from the rest.

If the comparison is done in relative terms, bearing in mind

Table 1. Sample Composition: Evening news shows broadcast by TV3, TVE-1, Antena 3 TV and Tele-5 on the following dates

Thursday 06-10-2005	6 immigrants die at the Melilla fence. The Vice-President announces the immediate expulsion of the sub-Saharan who managed to enter.
Friday 07-10-2005	Médicos sin Fronteras (MSF) finds more than 500 immigrants abandoned in the desert by the Moroccan authorities.
Saturday 08-10-2005	TV crews find the immigrants in the desert with no food or water. Diplomats from Mali and Senegal come to pick them up to repatriate them.
Sunday 09-10-2005	Morocco transfers the handcuffed immigrants in coaches to an unknown destination.
Monday 10-10-2005	The coaches arrive at the Mauritania border and the first planes leave for Senegal and Mali.
Tuesday 11-10-2005	Spanish Foreign Affairs Minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos meets his Moroccan counterpart in Rabat. Announcement of a Euro-African Summit on Immigration.
Wednesday 12-10-2005	Spain calls on the EU at the Luxemburg Summit to get more politically and economically involved in helping stop immigration from Africa. An EU reports claims 30,000 immigrants are waiting in Morocco and Algeria to enter Ceuta and Melilla.

Graph 1. Percentage of time devoted to information on the 'fence'



Source: authors' own work

the lengths of the respective news shows, the first position goes to Antena 3 TV (16.07% of the information broadcast was devoted to the issue), pushing TVE-1 into second place (15.12%), followed by Tele-5 (11.72%) and TV3 (11.56%) with fairly similar percentages.

Despite the similarity between public and private stations found in relation to presence times, when the variables of day, total time devoted and events that occurred were crossed, we see the support the different stations extended to the issue.

The exception was represented by Antena 3 TV, as the cancellation of two nights' news it hard to prepare a definitive line of action on the same terms as the other stations. The most characteristic features we found in the analysis were:

- **TV3:** The proportion of time devoted in its news programmes presents a line with few significant oscillations throughout the week. One important difference with respect to the behaviour of the other stations was the transmission on 10 October, when the station achieved its highest ratings (16.98%), coinciding with the arrival of the coaches that transported immigrants to the Mauritania border and the departure of the first planes for Senegal and Mali. Also, that same day, the regular information was complemented with a story focused on

women who had managed to get into Melilla, produced and made by the special correspondents, and which spoke to the main motives behind immigration.

- **TVE-1:** The station's evolution peaked on 8 October, coinciding with the day when television crews sent to the area found the immigrants abandoned in the desert and the agreements of the Moroccan authorities with the ambassadors from Mali and Senegal to repatriate their citizens. But the most noteworthy thing was the rise in the number of viewers on 12 October, coinciding with a fall in ratings at the other stations. This rise took place on the day when, at the European Union summit in Luxembourg, Spain called on the Union for more involvement in putting an end to immigration from Africa.
- **Tele-5:** This station gradually reduced the time it devoted to the events in Ceuta and Melilla, from 11'12" on 6 October to 57" on 12 October. The slight rise on 8 October was a result of the airing of a brief report on how various immigrants live in Spain. Unlike the two public stations, the issue only featured on the news rundown on five of the seven days – three as the top story, once as the second story and once as the fifth.
- **Antena 3 TV:** The issue was of great interest to the station as on three of the five days it was the lead story and on the other two it was the second and third story of the day. The time devoted ranged from 8'16" on 7 October to 4'48" on 10 October, a length that soared on 11 October (the last day analysed) due to footage broadcast to promote the station's current-affairs programme *A fondo*.

The features of each station suggests that rises in broadcasting time were almost never determined by the events of the day, but were usually the result of whether or not other material was available. The exception for the whole of the week was a unique example that responded to the application of journalistic criteria in TVE-1's evening news of 12 October. The inclusion of the EU summit on the rundown, possibly because of the availability of technical and human resources, increased the total time devoted to the issue of fence scaling in Ceuta and Melilla.

In terms of location on the news rundown and the body of the news shows, it was the lead story in the first two programmes of TV3 and the first three of TVE-1, while Tele-

5 and Antena 3 TV followed other strategies. In the case of Televisió Española, its presence on the rundown did not necessarily mean it was amongst the most important stories. On 8 October, although it was the lead story on the rundown, it was the 11th story on the programme. This appeared to be a strategy to keep up viewer interest, something which could implicitly mean it was classified as an issue of great social interest.

2. Journalistic Formats

The analysis shows a general trend of making use of live broadcasts, videos and off-camera statements. It is important to bear in mind that the production of one format or another is always related with the availability of the station's technical and human resources. For example, to prepare live broadcasts it is necessary to have correspondents and special correspondents on the ground and, in this case, geographic proximity facilitated their transferral, although the two private stations also used live phone crosses of much less audiovisual value. For the realisation of the second, the basic requirement is footage either produced by the station itself, or bought or lent by another source, or coming from audiovisual agencies or archive material. Obviously the presence of production teams in the area must firstly be able to increase the volume of footage produced inhouse and is good for station image. For off-camera reports, the third most used format, fewer images are required because they are of a shorter length than videos. Footage of a length just over the approximate text length is edited and one of the news presenters reads the text live. These texts are in fact brief summaries of an informative element about the events, or play the role of introducing and presenting videos, stories or live broadcasts.

The detailed observation of the week found significant homogeneity in relation to formats used, despite the different technical and human conditioning factors of each station. TVE-1 had a greater number of live broadcasts, always complemented with reports from correspondents from very diverse spots. This is logical to a certain extent given the scope of the public broadcaster's resources. On the other hand, the rest prioritised the video and off-camera

formats from the newsroom over live broadcasts or other journalistic genres. AT TV3, the second position was taken by non-live broadcasts made by the special correspondents, while at Antena 3 TV and Tele-5 live broadcasts came second: Tele-5 had a greater number of locations. With regards telephone broadcasts, the highest presence was at Antena 3 TV, while TV3 stood out quantitatively with regards phone crosses with NGO spokespeople.

This high level of similarity was also found in the production of less usual formats on television news shows, such as the reports that TVE-1, TV3 and Tele-5 chose to produce to complement other stories. The exception was Antena 3 TV, which aired a piece related to the issue in order to promote the station's current affairs programme *A fondo*.

To determine whether the level of similarity between the stations went further than the selection of a particular format, we had to analyse the oral information (the discourse of the presenters and journalists, and statements from people outside the station) and the images. Going into depth in these two areas provided new elements for the reflection and debate about the news treatment of the study object.

2.1. Textual Analysis

The textual analysis also spoke to a great uniformity among the stations and it is therefore difficult to highlight exceptional behaviour.

First of all, the language on the first day of the sample, 6 October, was warlike but then, after 7 October, it was abandoned. What was behind this change? Why was this type of language used on the first day? One possible hypothesis is the influence of the texts and versions of the sources of information used in the news production of the first day. The result was that all the stations classified the behaviour of the immigrants on 6 October negatively, whilst maintaining their own styles. All the expressions, even though they were always attributed to Moroccan sources, featured a negative connotation and put it to the viewers that the police had fired in legitimate defence. The two private stations spoke about immigrant violence, while the two public ones called it aggression. Tele-5 also featured a number of statements from the Home Secretary that reinforced this interpretation and at the same time seemed

to want to vouchsafe that there had been an inappropriate use of weapons and riot material on the part of the Moroccan police but in no case on the part of the Civil Guard or Spanish army. It is important to point out that the statement referred to the events of 29 September in Ceuta, where 5 immigrants died in an attempt to scale the fence, and not the events that led to the death of 6 immigrants in the early hours of 6 October in Melilla. The textual quote was as follows: "It could be said that the Civil Guard, in the incidents I refer to, i.e., of 29 September in Ceuta, made an appropriate use of the resources available to stop a violation of our border area that was direct, flagrant and forcible".

As of 7 October, when the NGOs began to denounce that the Moroccan authorities were taking groups of immigrants to the desert and abandoning them there, the stations' approach varied substantially, even though each maintained its own style. For example, the word 'scale' became 'storm', although they continued to every now and then use inappropriate words such as 'deportees', 'repatriates', 'expelled' and 'deposited'.

The information was always related with the consideration of a problem to resolve. In fact, all the stations explicitly used the word 'problem' (TV3 only twice) and other words that further intensified it: 'drama', 'dramatic', 'tragedy', 'tragic', 'desperate' and 'desperation'. The stations' outlook and perception about the immigrants and immigration was not therefore of a social phenomenon but rather a problem for governments and administrations to solve.

Another aspect that was very similar among the stations was the way immigrants were referred to. There was the generalised use of the word 'sub-Saharan' to refer to all the African citizens who wanted to enter Europe, probably due to the influence of the official sources and news agencies consulted. This generalisation hid the multicultural nature of Africa and standardised citizens from diverse countries with different economic, political and social situations. They term 'sub-Saharan' was used for everyone, when geographically sub-Saharan countries are those that fall in a strict line below the Sahara. It would be more appropriate to talk about 'African citizens' in general or, when the information is available, the particular country. The stations' difficulty in using the words 'people' or 'citizens' instead of 'immigrants' was very symptomatic. We only found a few examples of 'person/people' and two of

'citizens' in reference to the people who were to be returned to Mali and Senegal.

Another element shared by all the stations was the use of incorrect adjectives to classify the immigrants and words that did not meet the recommendations of the College of Journalists, the CAC or other entities and organisations. All the stations continued to use 'illegal' and 'irregular'. The most worrying case was Tele-5, which used the expression 'illegal immigrants' repeatedly. By contrast, TV3 showed the most sensitivity with regards adjectives, although the word 'illegal' was detected once.

Another common issue was the use of terminology that blew the events out of proportion, i.e., that impacted on sensationalism. On some occasions, the stations did so with the aim of denouncing a situation. In particular, there were two words that appeared repeatedly on all the stations:

- *Storm*. Particularly on 6 October, all the stations used this word to describe the Africans' actions in scaling the fence to enter Spain. In Spanish and Catalan alike, the main acceptance for this word is an attack on an enemy position and it also means a surprise and violent attack with the aim of robbing, or invading or taking over. It is therefore a word that connotes a military or warlike image and does not appear to correspond to the intentions of the immigrants, i.e., it does not fit the narrated reality. Tele-5 and Antena 3 TV even talked about 'exodus'. Cases where there was less synchrony between the oral narration and the footage were those where the voice and what was being heard were not the same. This lack of agreement was further accentuated in rundowns used with headlines that led to a different decoding of what the images said. One example was the headlines of 6 October on the four stations with words like 'storm' and 'avalanche'.
- *Avalanche*. Its figurative or similar meaning refers to a large number of people accumulated in a place, but the maximum number of people wanting to scale the fence given by the stations was around a thousand. A careful and precise use of the term 'avalanche' would be reserved for concentrations of a great many more people, at least various thousands. Such would be the case, for example, of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca or of a sporting concentration. Other words used in the same sense were 'tide', 'mass' and 'massive'. Curiously, each

Headlines 6-10-05. Left to right, top line: TVE-1 and Antena 3 TV. Second line: Tele-5 and TV3



station provided different figures on the number of people involved.

Finally, to a greater or lesser extent, all the stations used words in a way that did not match their meaning and which furthermore had a negative connotation with regards immigrants. Examples included:

- *Deportation* and its derivatives. The word means there has been a previous condemnation and therefore a trial. The Africans who wanted to get into Europe were not necessarily in this situation.
- *Extradition* and its derivatives. The meaning refers to the release of a prisoner to another country in which he or she must stand trial. It has nothing to do with the condition of these people.
- *Devolution* and its derivatives. This word is used with objects but not with people. TVE-1 also used 'deposited' and Antena 3 TV, 'thrown'.
- *Expulsion* and its derivatives. Although it means expulsion from a place, it also has the meaning of banishment and thus also takes on the meaning of a punishment. Some stations spoke of 'interment'.
- *Repatriation* and its derivatives. This term was not applied

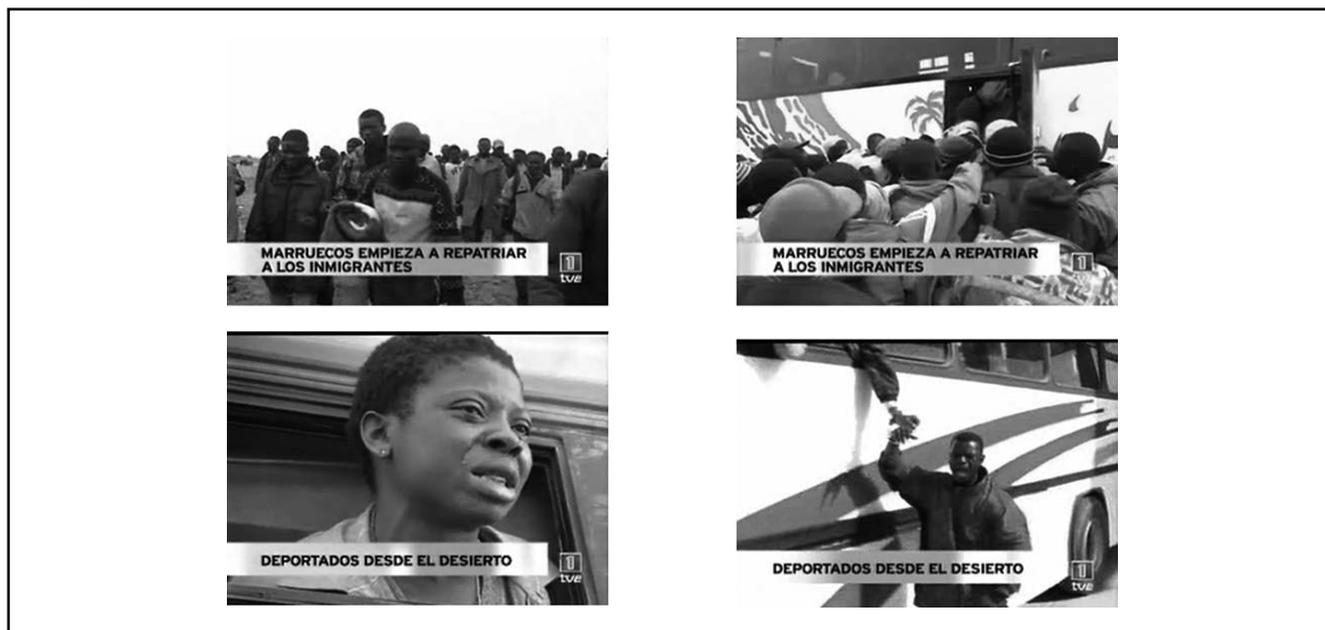
correctly, as only the citizens from Mali and Senegal were returned to their homelands, i.e., were really repatriated. The situation of the rest of the people involved was not the same.

On the contrary, the presence of words used with their exact meaning was scarce. For example only once did Tele-5 mention the more precise and accurate word 'moved' and TV3 was the only one to mention 'readmission', in reference to the action of entering Morocco, even though the Africans concerned were passing through the country. Another example of writing that tries to avoid terms with pejorative connotations appeared when TV3 used the word 'passengers' twice on 9 October in reference to the people inside the coaches.

When, furthermore, some of these expressions featured in the headlines that appear on screen on top of rundown footage or on the first shots of the story, the negative effect, as the following frames show, is even greater because viewers tend to focus more on reading the words than on listening to the oral discourse.

As the pictures show, there were bad practices on the part of the four stations and, in the latter case, we can see how

TVE-1, 8 and 9 October



TV3 repeated in the rundown of 10 October one of the shots of handcuffed immigrants in the coaches filmed the previous day, although with a more precise and appropriate title, i.e., “forced return”.

2.2. Visual Analysis

In terms of the visual section, this also showed a high level of homogeneity among the stations, even more marked than what we found in the textual analysis. The stations aired the same shots and, if not exactly the same, they resembled each other, something we could call the ‘globalisation’ of production routines among television journalists.

All the stations inserted footage from the Home Office with the aim of explaining the modifications to be made to the fence. TVE-1, Antena 3 TV and Tele-5 featured the story on 6 October and TV3 the next day. But the most significant element was that TVE-1 and Antena 3 TV used the Department’s title saying “New Anti-Intrusion System”. Tele-5 did not title the piece and the Catalan public station replaced it with “Expansion of the Fence”.

Immigrants were the main protagonists of the visual narrative of the events. Most of the stations mixed more or less broad general group shots with close-ups and even extreme

close-ups to emphasise the most dramatic elements of the situation. This was a further demonstration of homogeneity, as with more or less proportion and depending on the station, images with a clear emotional impact were used (injured feet, a very close-up shot of the barbed wire fence, bloodstains on the ground, etc.) and of the close-ups and general shots of groups of individuals in a situation of suffering, always aimed at sensationalism. The exception was once again TV3, as, despite having close-ups of sad faces or people behind a fence, to give two examples, it featured them only briefly and the oral discourse took a non-dramatic approach.

The most dramatic and possibly most shocking image was from 9 October. It was a very close-up shot of handcuffed hands hanging out a coach window with no head to go along with them. All the stations used the shot that day and went on to repeat it with new edits on the following days. TV3 stood out from this general trend, as it gave it less time and reported directly what the immigrants were calling out from inside the coaches (i.e., what in a written text would be a textual quote). It did not focus on the tragic details by not detailing the images like the other stations did. Instead, it provided information on the situation, using figures from NGOs.

Antena 3 TV, 7 and 10 October



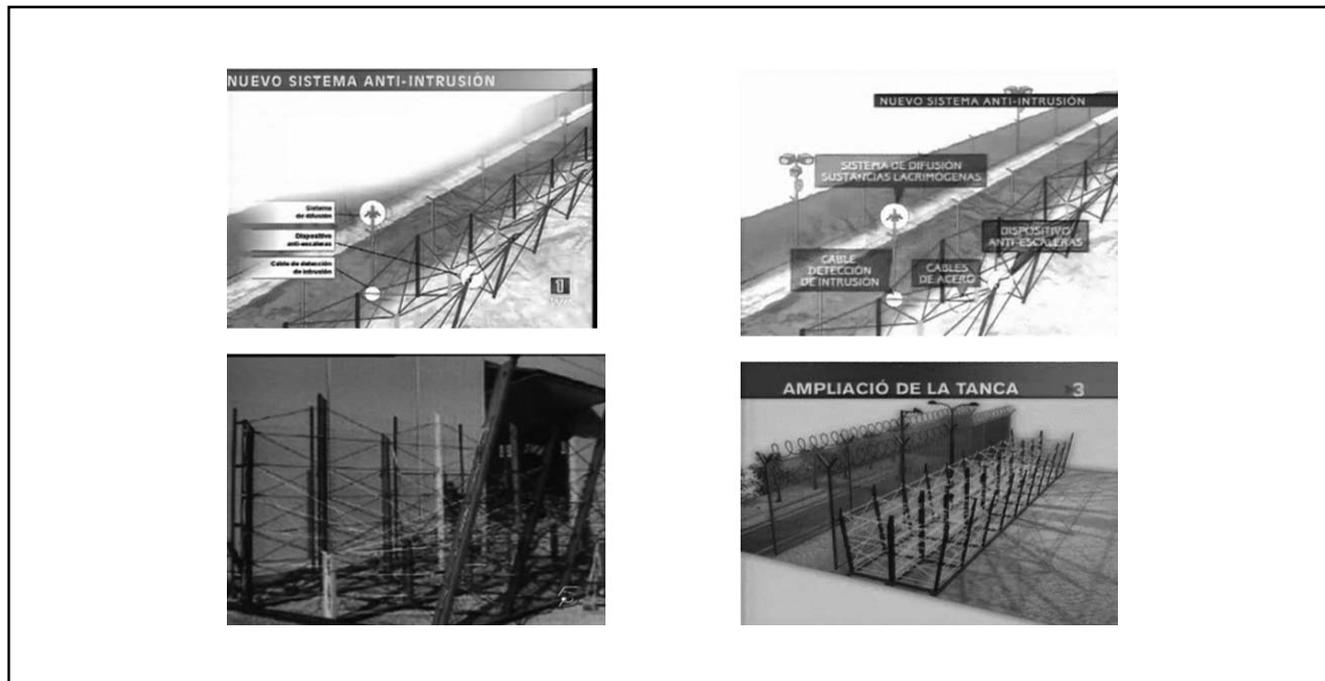
Tele-5, 9 and 10 October



TV3, 9 and 10 October



The New Fence. Left to right, top line: TVE-1 and Antena 3 TV. Second line: Tele-5 and TV3



On the other hand, the other stations applied edits with clearly sensationalistic purposes. These included:

- a) The edit based on an oral description that emphasised the most tragic details, followed by a pause in which the viewer could only hear background noises with the images. For example, before showing someone imploring, Antena 3 TV says, “others, with tears in their eyes, desperately ask for help” and Tele-5 explains: “The desperation is so great that many cannot contain their tears”. Before showing the handcuffed hands, TVE-1 says “From the small window space, they show us their pain and desperation” and Tele-5 notes “From the coach windows they show the journalists their handcuffs over and over again”.
- b) The assembled edit with different shots to show the evolution of a complete dramatic action. This type of edit was only used by Tele-5. All the stations showed a person climbing out the window, but Tele-5 devoted more time to it, cobbling together a series of shots that enabled viewers to witness the whole process. At the same time, a voice off-camera said: “This young man tries to escape from the coach any way he can. Even handcuffed, he climbs out the window” and then the ima-

ge is left on-screen with background noise that ends with the cries of the protagonist of the action. Although it devoted less time, TVE-1 also emphasised the dramatic events of the situation from an oral discourse: “With tears flowing and in a desperate attempt to get off the coach, they called for help which unfortunately nobody offered”. This strategy was also used to Antena 3 TV: “Many of them take advantage of any stop to escape”.

Although the Catalan public station did not resort to such drama in its edits, the analysis found some negative aspects that affected the visual quality of the information broadcast. TV3 worked with three types of images: those that came from Moroccan television, archive footage and its own images. The former presented a problem of identification because the image of the Catalan station’s logo was superimposed over that of the Moroccan station’s one and offered a strange visual composition at the top right-hand side of the screen. The voice off-camera (Arabic) was the only element that suggested where the images came from. Although the archive footage was appropriately identified, there was a certain amount of abuse. A similar situation occurred with the station’s own images which, because

TVE-1, 9 October



Antena 3 TV, 9 October



Tele-5, 9 October





there were few of them, ended up being reused in other edits and thus generated a certain degree of repetition, particularly in the final two news bulletins of the week analysed.

Tele-5 also broadcast the images that came from the Moroccan station the first day of the week: it thus did the same as the Catalan station. The difference in the case of Tele-5 was that its logo was positioned at the bottom of the screen so the station's regular viewers knew the images belonged to another station, in this case a foreign one.

It is important to add that both stations opened the news rundown of 6 October with these images – which the Moroccan police provided to the Moroccan station – and left the Arabic voiceover clearly discernible for a number of seconds. This strategy could lead to confusion among a public watching TV in Spanish or Catalan, but it did serve to reinforce the impact. Over the course of the week, these images were recycled in other edits. Clear proof of a more inappropriate type of edit was the reuse of the images in news rundowns on different days.

3. Standardisation in the Television Reconstruction of the Events

This is, without a doubt, the principal characteristic the analysis found with regard to the television treatment of the events at the fences in Ceuta and Melilla. Although the audio differed greatly, the similarity in the images minimised the impact. It is important to underline that the use of a more or less precise terminology can easily pass unnoticed when it comes to receiving information from TV, as the images capture most of the viewer's attention – so much so that, if the voiceover were exchanged with the visuals of another story, you would probably pick up on anything being wrong.

With some occasional exceptions, similarity is proof of common production strategies that end up becoming action protocols. We have already said that, because of its characteristics, TVE-1 is the station that could have greatest deployment of technical and human resources. The final result of its operation, however, was not significantly different from the others. A greater number of live crosses did

Antena 3 TV, 9 October



Tele-5, 9 October



Tele-5, 6 October



TV3, 6 October



not lead to the production of new internal footage or a wide range of testimonies. It is important to add that it was politicians, i.e., sources of information of easy access to news professionals, who were awarded the greatest presence.

Another matter worth pointing out in relation to the production of information is the repetition of images throughout the week analysed, even though the stations had sent reporters and sometimes correspondents to the spot. It is hard to discern the causes, but the result was edits that were more or less similar and which ended up negatively impacting the reception of the story. In fact, repetition of the visual material generated a loss of attention about the story, because although new information was arriving via the sound, the stations were unable to achieve a level of impact with the images. Also, this procedure highlights the lack of visual action, something which television information has to avoid. If we add the fact that, in some cases, these types of images were not identified, it is very likely that viewers, by default, considered them to be from that day.

The content of the repeated images can end up reinforcing certain stereotypes. For example, with the profusion of general group shots, the immigrant becomes an anonymous being that acts in line with the guidelines of the group and further accentuates the association between poverty and immigration. On the other hand, close-ups and detailed shots increase the level of news sensationalism. Even though all the stations included them in their discourses, Antena 3 TV was undoubtedly the one that most closely resembled a media circus, even on the basis of general shots. The best example was the report of 6 October, when significant time was devoted to the image of an injured African man who had managed to enter Melilla (he is shown limping along the street, in the hospital, getting into a car, etc.) and, in the summary, is presented as a hero ("only one, this young man, managed to enter Spain"). Even still, he didn't get a chance to speak on air.

Although it is true that the term 'problem' to define the story was not used often, the narrative structure in the majority of the stations responded to this idea. Tele-5 focused on seeking responsibilities in the political field; Antena 3 TV played witness to the drama the protagonists were undergoing; TVE-1 tried to address the political question and dramatic matters in a balanced fashion; and finally TV3 explained the particular situation from a social/humanitarian

perspective. This strategy affected the description of a particular problem that had to be solved. Delimiting the issue to a particular time period prevents going deeply into aspects that have influenced and which continue to influence this type of contemporary migration. For example, information on the political and socioeconomic situation of the home countries are necessary to complement the main story. In short, it involves trying to apply what is known in journalistic circles as 'contextualisation'. In all the material analysed, there were only three cases of complementary information being contributed: on 7 October on Antena 3 TV, 10 October on TV3 and 12 October on TVE-1.

The work of constructing the news context obviously has to avoid the generalised appropriation of the term 'sub-Saharan' to define immigrants affected by the events at the fence. Furthermore, this work contains a pejorative load (*sub*), while the prefix 'South' would be more appropriate because it involves a geographic, not qualitative, reference.

4. Sources of Information

The statements included in the news shows analysed mostly corresponded to politicians (38%) and immigrants (34%); followed in third place by spokespeople from NGOs (24%) and finally the category *others* (4%), mainly constituting what we called 'locals'. However, not all the stations participated in this global snapshot in the same fashion.

The stations that awarded the most weight to the political sphere were TVE-1 and Tele-5, but while the public station appeared to counteract this presence with other types, the private station stood out for giving less speaking time to spokespeople and members of NGOs.

The stations where the immigrants and NGOs had the highest representation were TV3 and Antena 3 TV, but with different types of nuances: TV3 identified all the immigrants (except in once case), while Antena 3 TV only did so in 3 out of 11 cases of people being interviewed. Also, from the qualitative viewpoint, it should be borne in mind that TV3 most often featured the image of an active immigrant taking decisions and working to overcome his situation, while most of the statements on Antena 3 TV were aimed at showing suffering and anguish, i.e., fertilising the ground of sensationalism. Thus TV3 better developed the social/



humanitarian side while the private station opted for social tragedy.

In the area of source identification, the majority of politicians and NGO spokespeople were identified, but this was not so standardised in the case of immigrants.

In terms of the sources mentioned in the journalistic texts (without statements), there was a predominance of press and broadcast agencies. However, this is not synonymous with greater diversity of consulted sources, because they also relied heavily on the administrations or governments of Spain and Morocco and on NGOs.

5. Monitoring and Application of the CAC Recommendations

The degree of compliance and application of the CAC recommendations of 10 April 2002 on the news treatment of immigration aimed at broadcast journalists was measured by designing a barometer. There were two goals: one was to test it and the other was to check the extent to which the recommendations were followed. We designed this

barometer to measure the degree of positive treatment, news quality and good journalistic practices contained in the broadcast units referring to the events at the fences in Ceuta and Melilla. In particular, we studied the application of the recommendations detailed below - and the valuation obtained by each station and by indicators was as follows:

- **Do not call African immigrants 'illegal', 'undocumented', 'without papers' or 'irregular'. The information must not contain prejudices of a xenophobic or discriminatory nature:**

This recommendation had a high response, but it was still not applied 100%. In the oral discourses, these terms only appeared occasionally: TV3, TVE-1, Antena 3 TV and Tele-5 occasionally used expressions that did not meet this recommendation. Tele-5 also repeatedly abused the expression 'illegal immigrant' in many of its headlines, but only twice in the oral discourses.

- **Information must be given on African emigration and its contexts.**

This was one of the recommendations that was least applied over the course of the seven days. On 7 October

Table 2. Number and Source of the Statements

Number and Source of the Statements				
	Politics	ONG	Immigrants	Altres
TV3	5	7	12	-
TVE-1	19	6	10	2
Antena 3 TV	5	15	11	1
Tele-5	16	1	8	2
TOTAL	45	29	41	5

Source: authors' own work

it was applied at Antena 3 TV, on 10 October it was followed by TV3 and on 12 October it was followed by TVE-1. For its part, Tele-5 did not apply this recommendation in the analysed period.

- **Stories must include statements from experts that help in the reflection about the underlying reasons behind migration.**

Only 12 out of the 26 news stories analysed included statements by people we considered experts in this framework, such as NGO spokespeople who work with immigrants both in the area and in Spain (four on TV3, four on Antena 3 TV, three on TVE-1 and one on Tele-5). Antena 3 TV was the station that most regularly included this recommendation (in four of the five news shows analysed), but it must be borne in mind that on many occasions its criterion for selecting statements responded basically to its sensationalist features.

On the first day of the sample, only the two public stations followed this recommendation. On 7 October all the stations followed it, although some in the headlines and others in the news. On 8 October no news story included the voice of an expert. On 9 October these types of statements only appeared on Antena 3 TV and TV3 (in the news units). On 10 October only Antena 3 TV followed the recommendation in the stories. On 11 October it was only the news units of TVE-1 and Antena 3 TV who took it into account, and on 12 October the TV3 news story was the only one to employ the recommendation.

- **Stories must include immigrants as a news source and so they must be shown making statements.**

This recommendation, one of the ones that should be considered the most basic and fundamental for comparing facts, was not followed by any station on 6 October. No station, therefore, tried to record immigrants speaking about the events on the first day of the sample. In the case of Antena 3 TV, it is worth recalling that it showed different shots of an immigrant identified as being the only one who had managed to scale the fence, but it did not include any statement by him. The immigrant's voice was not heard on the last day, either, as the focus of the story moved to the political sphere.

With regards the other days, TV3 and Antena 3 TV followed this recommendation more often than the other stations. However, the presence of immigrants in the headlines was scarce, and did not feature at TVE-1 in any day of the sample.

- **Do not use images that invade an immigrant's privacy.**

All the stations respected this recommendation on 6 October, although Antena 3 TV did show some shots which, although not close-ups, could be considered intimidating (see the image). In terms of the other days of the sample, the public stations tended to respect this recommendation more than the private ones.

- **Do not use archive footage that is not relevant.**

On 6 October, the day when the events first began, all the stations respected this recommendation, but as of 7 October they all began, to different degrees as we shall see, to repeat the most striking images from previous days, even if they were no longer very relevant. Also, in the majority of cases, there was no voiceover saying the images were not from that day, nor were the images labelled with the corresponding date. Only TV3 regularly labelled images, but it also sometimes used unidentified footage. The images most commonly reused were of immigrants in the desert and the coaches.

- **Avoid using images from the security forces.**

Between 6 and 9 October, TV3, Tele-5 and Antena 3 TV used images recorded by the Moroccan police. Each of the three used them in two editions of their news shows.

- **It is important to contextualise information with information on the immigrants' home countries.**

This recommendation was not often applied. The examples of good practices coincided with those explained in the second recommendation. On 7 October it was applied by Antena 3 TV, on 10 October by TV3 and on 12 October by TVE-1.

- **Aspects of the immigrants' daily life must be explained which do not include hunger, poverty or conflict.**

This recommendation was only employed on four occasions over the seven days. The first was by Tele-5 (in the headline of 6 October) and the second was also by Tele-5 (in a news story of 8 October). The third was the news story of 9 October by TVE-1 and the fourth was the news story of TV3 on 11 October. Antena 3 TV did not apply this recommendation.

- **Do not use close-ups of injured or dead Africans.**

This recommendation was very well followed and in general the four stations did not recreate close-ups to discuss dead or injured people. However, on 6 October no station followed this recommendation. This is fairly logical, because the main news event was the death of six immigrants at the Melilla fence. No shots of dead

people were shown but there were shots of the injured. Furthermore, TV3 showed two archive-labelled shots of dead people from previous days, something which was very negative and unnecessary.

With regards the rest of the week analysed, the public stations were more likely to not apply this recommendation. However, the oral discourse that accompanied the shots usually tried to distance the images from the dramatic effect, particularly at TV3. Of the private stations, Tele-5 stood out for the use of these images on the final days of the sample.

6. Conclusions and Proposals

All the stations dedicated significant time and a lead position to the events that occurred at the fences of Ceuta and Melilla in October 2005. However, each oriented its narrations differently. TV3 showed a humanitarian vision of the events, with special attention on information from NGOs and immigrants themselves. TVE-1's orientation involved more political actions, both the first reactions and subsequent decisions taken and the responses obtained by them. Tele-5, on the other hand, prioritised the political confrontation and positioned itself closer to the leading opposition party than the government. Finally, Antena 3 TV applied more strategies addressed at sensationalism. It is no coincidence that it was this station that cancelled the broadcasting of two news stories using the excuse of a sports transmission, or the fact that on 6 and 9 October (analysed separately) it gave more priority to sport. But this diversity of orientations does not mean the stations followed very different types of actions. On the contrary: the analysis shows many aspects in common and furthermore many that require correcting.

The phenomenon of immigration continues to be treated as a problem, as a drama and, in this case, during the news shows on these seven days, nobody questioned the existence of the border between the north (Europe) and the south (Africa) and the stations maintained a Euro-centric viewpoint of **us**, the Europeans, and **them**, the African immigrants. Only in report programmes did some stations approach the existence of the 'walls', physical borders that in the 21st century impede the passage of people from poor

Antena 3 TV: Shot of the young man the station presented as a hero (“Only one, this young man, managed to enter Spain”)



parts of the planet to rich ones. They did not go into detail about the reasons for immigration or the political, economic or social situations of the African countries. Immigrants were shown either as criminals (aggressive and violent) or victims (passive and without no ability to act). There was repeated abuse in all the narrations of the words ‘immigrant’ and ‘sub-Saharan’ and practically zero use of ‘persons’ or ‘citizens’ to refer to these human beings. This classification as an immigrant involves a permanent discrimination in the public imagination. In society and the media, the immigrant never loses his condition of immigrant, something that connotes a negative image.

If we look at female immigrants, their audiovisual treatment is even more worrying. They almost never appear and, if they do, they are usually shown in fairly sensationalist shots (cooking with barely any resources, looking after sickly looking children, etc.).

Although the CAC recommendations, and in particular those referring to not using xenophobic or discriminatory

vocabulary or images, are increasingly respected by the stations, the textual and visual analysis of the news shows involving the events referring to the attempts to scale the fences at Ceuta and Melilla reveal they still have to improve in many aspects. All the stations exaggerated the events to a greater or lesser extent, used inappropriate words at least sometimes and continued to introduce images with a clearly sensationalistic purpose, to mention just three of the most important aspects. These types of problem were particularly clear in the summaries and presentations, sections where the stations’ aim is to attract viewer interest and attention and, to a lesser extent, in the news stories.

All up, we can say that NGOs and immigrants have an increasingly greater presence in the sources of information, but they are not always handled properly from the audiovisual viewpoint. The station that took most care in this regard was TV3: it regularly identified them (at least indicating the name of the interviewee) and was also the station that showed the most concern for reproducing their words,

Tele-5



TV3, 6 October



There were enough images from the day and so it is quite gratuitous to use these two archive images, even though the oral narration mentions they are not the first deaths at the fence.

clearly separating them from the reporter's discourse. But despite that, it is important to look at the fact that interviewing members of NGOs and/or immigrant citizens is not always synonymous with good practices, as they may be aimed at sensationalism. Antena 3 TV's broadcasts included numerous examples where the selection criterion of the statements aired clearly corresponded to their emotional component.

This study also showed that the stations do not always apply mechanisms to make the context (with a high social responsibility) meet the information arriving from the sources. For example, some stations included images from the Home Office (visual explanations of the work to expand the fence) without modifying the original headline "new anti-intrusion system" and, even more significantly, on the first day all the stations were contaminated by a warlike and military language with a predominance of official news sources. Beginning the second day, with the introduction of NGOs as sources of information, the language modified into a treatment more focused on the social and humanitarian aspects.

It is therefore necessary to continue to work to get the recommendations prepared by well-regarded institutions to be known and applied, with everything that involves in terms of dissemination and training tasks.

Besides this general proposal and apart from insisting on the need to apply the recommendations defined by the CAC, this study looked at the need to attend the following particular aspects:

- Stations and their employees have to be concerned with applying good practices in all informational formats on the news. In particular, on headlines (summaries) and presentations, the formats most open to sensationalism.
- Stations have to make a greater effort to contribute contextualised information (background, causes, etc.). The range of information sources consulted must be expanded to make way for this type of information and to ensure that the information that reaches viewers is confirmed.
- With regard to statements by immigrants, it is necessary to identify them and journalistic rigour must be guaranteed in the reproduction of their words (the discourse of the interviewee must be clearly differentiated from the rest and the quality of the translation must be guaran-

teed).

- With regards vocabulary, it is a good idea to use words with more rigour, always bearing their meaning in mind. In the event of using terms in a metaphorical sense, negative aspects must not be connoted.
- When it comes to selecting statements, in no case must the criterion of sensationalism prevail over information.
- The treatment of immigrant women must be improved, as well as the journalistic quality of this treatment.
- Overall, television stations must contribute a lot more to providing an image as normalised and normalising as possible of immigrants and immigration through audiovisual and textual treatments equivalent to those of any other citizen. The condition of immigrant should not be highlighted or differentiated in the information about the events unless strictly necessary to understanding them.
- Television stations also have to meet a pedagogical role and, as well as report and entertain, must support diversity and multiculturalism in their news shows to explain and spread knowledge among the people who come from their home countries and the people who are here in the host countries.

7. Applied Audiovisual Research

As the purpose of this study and analysis was an audiovisual product, to help people understand, consult and even experiment with the news shows in the sample, the complete research work on which this article is based contains, along with a much more extensive text, an annex of written material, photos and graphics and an interactive DVD.

The DVD² includes two alternative videos proposals referring to the events of 6 October, with the aim of showing different ways of addressing the events audiovisually. Fruit of this applied audiovisual research work, Migracom made up an alternative video about the events of 6 October at the Melilla wall which shows it is possible to audiovisually and textually cover the information using standards other than the ones used by the leading stations.

The first proposal corresponds to the Televisió de Catalunya youth channel, K3. It involves a video broadcast

on 6 October on its youth news show called *Info-K*, which goes to air Mondays to Fridays at 7 p.m. It is paradoxical to see that K3, in the information of 6 October, while still using practically the same images, explained the events with a precise language that did not fall into the generalised stereotype of calling the people of Africa who try to enter Spain via the Melilla fence 'sub-Saharan'. Furthermore, the word 'immigrant' was never used in the video that lasted 1 minute and 43 seconds and, on the other hand, the oral narration featured with all naturalness the words 'persons' and 'Africans'. The whole of the news story denotes a certain level of excellence and exquisite manners in covering the events without criminalizing the people who try to come to Europe in search of a better life. The second proposal is an alternative video made by Migracom and narrated in Spanish, as a counterpoint to what was broadcast by TVE-1, Antena 3 TV and Tele-5. It uses images from TV3 and from Moroccan television. The content of the internal textual information, in a more elaborate and even 'provocative' language (compared with the language seen each day on the big TV stations), prioritises human rights, goes more deeply (although still not very deeply) into the immigration phenomenon and avoids a discriminatory discourse. The same text, with images shot expressly with a normalising vocation and with African citizens explaining the reasons why they try to emigrate, could contribute even further to a non-conflictive image and which is often associated with crime among the people who want to come to Europe because the possibility of subsisting in their own countries is slight.

The DVD also contains all the news shows from the four stations and a comparative edit of the summaries and news stories from 6 and 9 October.

In the case of the summaries it experiments with a comparative edit that shows that some of the unifying elements featured in this article and which were used by the public and private stations alike are completely interchangeable without dysfunctions. We put the oral narration of one station with the images of another both for 6 and 9 October and the result was in some cases even better synchronisation. For 6 October we exchanged TVE-1 and Antena 3 TV because both stations used generic images of the Melilla fence, and we changed Tele-5 and TV3 because they both used shots from Moroccan television.

For 9 October we changed the public stations and did the same with the private ones. The fact that the images of the coaches were practically the same meant the exchange could be done among them all without any problem in terms of synchronisation. The experiment also revealed a series of homogenous audiovisual elements in the summaries, such as narrative pace, intonation, music, graphs and the brevity of the oral narration.

Some of these production routines therefore condition and connote the news and audiovisual treatment of events, in this case ones referring to immigration and immigrants. As we saw in the evening news shows of the four stations, the events at the Ceuta and Melilla fences projected an image of events that ranged from sensationalistic, in the most negative case, to humanitarian, in the most positive one. There was also a pre-eminence of political confrontation over migration, despite the social dimension of the events.

Multiculturalism and inter-culturalism were not well enough reflected on the news shows and a general vision predominated about immigrants related with conflict. But by 8, 9 and 10 October the immigrants became victims of inhumane treatment by the Moroccan authorities and the stations reflected this.

Notes

- 1 Study carried out by MIGRACOM-UAB, the Consolidated Research Group at the Generalitat of Catalonia, under the leadership of Manel Mateu and with the support of the CAC.
- 2 The DVD can be consulted at the MIGRACOM website: www.migracom.com i a la web de la Mesa per a la Diversitat en l'Audiovisual del Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya